Delay in announcing MSP for paddy

357. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the reason of delay in the announcement of Minimum Support Price of paddy inspite of taking a decision;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government agencies are not buying the paddy arriving in the market inspite of their willingness; and

(c) whether Government would prefer to buy paddy through middlemen; if not, by.when Government would declare the Minimum Support Price in order to get rid the farmers of this problem and save them from the clutches of middlemen?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The Government has already announced the Minimum Support Price as Rs. 530 per quintal for common variety and Rs. 560 for Gr. 'A' variety of Paddy for the 2002-03 Kharif Season.

(b) and (c) A total quantity of 8.21 million tonnes of rice (including paddy converted into rice) has been procured so far during the current Kharif Marketing Season as against 7.93 million tonnes of rice (including paddy converted into rice) during the corresponding period last year.

Ambitious plan for drought

358, SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country has first time witnessed the worst drought during the last twelve years;

(b) if so, the names of the States most affected by the drought;

(c) the amount of financial assistance provided by the Central Government to the drought affected States;

(d) whether Government have formulated any ambitious scheme to prevent the drought; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (e) The States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal have reported drought. Details of release of the Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and assistance approved by the High Level Committee (HLC) which is subject to adjustment against available balances in the CRF of the States is given below:—

(Rs. in crore)

State	CRF released	Assistance approved by the HLC
Andhra Pradesh	163.77	74.61
Chhattisgarh	22.72	92.73
Gujarat	—	—
Haryana	67.23	109.65
Himachal Pradesh	35.96	39.45
Jharkhand	—	42.06
Karnataka	61.66	221.46
Madhya Pradesh	51.78	125.89
Maharashtra	129.99	20.00
Orissa	90.52	120.18
Punjab	101.47	125.41
Rajasthan	171.16	207.68
Uttar Pradesh	120.95	481.10
Uttaranchal	13.38	10.62
West Bengal	41.80	—

Droughts are inevitable natural phenomena, which are not altogether preventable.

There are, however, a number of instrumentalities in the form of preventive irrigation, Watershed Development Dryland farming techniques, crop diversification and adoption of suitable drought resistance varities of crops which mitigate the effect of drought. These form subject matter of schemes under implementation by various Central Ministries and State Governments.

Central teams on droughts and floods

359. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
DR. ABRAR AHMED:
SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):
PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central teams which were sent to various drought affected States to study the damage done to crops and its impact on farmers have submitted their reports to Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof in respect of each State;

(c) the nature of assistance provided to affected States, so far; and

(d) whether the Central teams were sent to flood hit States including Assam and Bihar also; if so, the findings thereof and the Central aid sought and given to each of these two States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) The States visited by the Central Team and the amounts approved